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*Gardenia petiolata* (Walt.) n. comb. *Hypericum petiolatum* Walt. Fl. Car. 191 (1788). Louisiana to Indiana, eastward to the coast as far north as New Jersey.

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### Notes on Birds of the Vicinity of Washington, Pennsylvania.\*

BY DR. AND MRS. W. C. M'CLELLAND.

The observations that follow were chiefly made during the last ten years, 1911-1921. They give some brief account of bird behavior within an area probably less than a square mile in extent. This base, or locus observandi, includes a leafy suburb of Washington, Pa., valley land and hills, cultivated fields, a cemetery, gardens, orchards and woodland. The orchards are of old apple trees while the forests are deciduous, the white oak being the commonest tree, with varied often thick undergrowth. The elevation is from 1000 to 1400 feet, and the hillsides incline toward all the points of the compass. Latitude 40°, 10"; longitude 80° W.

The permanent bird residents we most often see or hear, summer and winter, include the cardinal grosbeak, the chickadee, the tufted tit, the downy woodpecker, the white-breasted nuthatch, the English sparrow, the song sparrow, the Carolina wren, the Bob-white and the screech owl.

Less common in winter, but often seen at other seasons, are the blue jay, the goldfinch, the red-bellied woodpecker, the cedar wax-wing, and the crow. The hairy woodpecker and the brown-breasted nuthatch though generally rated as permanent residents of Western Pennsylvania, are in our small district rather rare. The screech owl is occasionally heard.

A few robins, and some years a grackle or two, remain with us over winter. The winter wren, the tree sparrow, the brown creeper, the golden-crowned kinglet and in larger numbers the juncos are familiar visitors.

\* Contribution from the Biological Laboratory, Washington and Jefferson College, No. 74.

Of familiar summer residents the robins begin to arrive in February; the grackles, the redwings and the bluebirds, early in March. A flicker has been noted February 24th, but usually this genuine harbinger of spring delays his coming until late in March. The mourning dove, reputed to be a permanent resident in our latitude, we have not seen earlier in the season than March 19.

The following according to our field notes, are dates of arrivals of other summer residents: towhee, March 19-23; field sparrow, March 17-25; Phoebe, March 15-25; sparrow hawk, March 19-23; chipping sparrow, April 3-10; brown thrasher, April 7-18; house wren, April 7-20; blue-gray gnat-catcher, April 15-21; yellow warbler, April 21-24; swift, April 15-30; wood thrush, April 25-May 1; catbird, April 26-May 4; Baltimore oriole, April 28-May 2; orchard oriole, April 28-May 4; warbling vireo, April 28-May 5; barn swallow, April 28-May 13; rose-breasted grosbeak, May 5-22; oven-bird, April 28-May 3; great crest, April 28-May 5; Maryland yellow-throat, May 17; redstart, May 8-15; chat, May 13-17; Acadian fly-catcher, May 10-21; indigo bunting, May 8-18; scarlet tanager, May 5-18; red-headed woodpecker, May 10-19; humming bird, May 8-20; purple martin, April 16-May 6; wood pewee and king-bird, May 8. The woodcock has been seen by us about the middle of May but possibly it is a permanent resident. It is not common.

The tardiest of our summer residents to arrive, as it seems to us, are the yellow-billed and the black-billed cuckoos. Usually they do not appear before the last days of May or the first week in June. The yellow-billed bird is the most often heard and seen.

Of the thrushes only the wood thrush nests in Western Pennsylvania. During the spring migration the hermit comes earliest, usually early in April; the veery, April 3-16; the olive-backed thrush seems not to reach our locality until late in May.

As is well known, most of the warblers are transients in and much beyond the field of our observations, only visiting us on their journeys north and south. In the spring they are arriving and departing from the last of April to the last of May in something like the following order: the myrtle, the

black and white, the Nashville, the northern water-thrush, the caerulean, the hooded, the chestnut-sided, the Kentucky the bay-breasted, the parula, the black-throated green, the black-throated blue, the mourning, the prairie, the Tennessee, the magnolia, the Cape May, the golden-winged, the Blackburnian, Wilson's, the black poll and the Canadian. At all events this is the showing of our observations.

Of transient sparrows we have noted the fox, the white-crowned and the white-throated; the fox sparrow appears early in April; the other two in May.

Both the night hawk and the whippoorwill we have seen and heard, but we have no record of their coming or going. Vesper and grasshopper sparrows, so far as our testimony goes, are summer residents arriving in April.

A few birds are seen by us not every year but at long intervals, the parula and the golden-winged warblers for example. The purple finch is reported as a winter visitor but we have seen it only now and then and always in the early spring. Once or twice only, bobolinks have delighted us by a visit of a few days in May to a nearby grassy hillside. A flock of crossbills have given us a single visit. Once a pleasant surprise came in the rare advent of six or eight evening grossbeaks, wanderers from the far Northwest. A single visit from a little green heron proved less exciting. Just once in many years have we heard the honking of wild geese flying north, or in any direction.

But these recalled the behavior of a representative of their family. When cannon were being fired one Fourth of July many years ago, our special observation was that at the sound of each explosion a swan would start like a frightened horse, whereas a Canada goose near it in the same pond showed no sign of disturbance. Once each a straggling mockingbird and a bewildered grebe have come our way.

Migratory birds are often said to return with great regularity. In confirmation of this we have noted the return of Baltimore orioles April 28th for three successive seasons. An orchard oriole put in a first spring appearance, alighting on a low bush near our breakfast room window at 7:30 one May day morning. The next year it was observed to return to the same bush on the same day and at the same hour precisely.

It may have been another male of the same species, but only one pair of these birds had been nesting in the neighborhood. nor did any other pair take up their abode with us that year.

In our vicinity the cardinal grosbeak has become suburban, building in the vines of porches of our own and our neighbors' houses. To the contrary, English sparrows have almost deserted our streets, since automobiles drop but little half-digested grain. Robins with us are abundant and seem to be increasing in numbers but the blackbirds, or bronze grackles, are by far the most numerous of our feathered populations. In September and October they are about us in imposing flocks that must contain hundreds of thousands of individuals.

Our bluebirds fluctuate greatly in numbers. Once they were not observed for two successive seasons. During their sometimes belated journeys south, violent, cold storms no doubt destroy many of them. The red-headed woodpecker appears of late to be growing very rare. We wonder if such locally new pests as the San José scale may injuriously affect its health. The red-eyed vireo is reported by some observers to be very common in Pennsylvania, but in our neighborhood, so far as our observations go, it is never seen. The warbling vireo is common. Purple martins and orchard orioles have apparently gone from us permanently; the former ousted by English sparrows, the latter disinherited by the felling of a thick-foliaged buckeye tree.

The list of birds that we have satisfactorily identified in our area includes about a hundred different species; the number of species seen each year varies from 75 to 85 according to our luck and diligence. Obviously our chances for the thrill of future discovery, even within the narrow confines of our avian territory, "just here about home," have not been exhausted.

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